

### 3) Case Study: Empowering

This case study shows how the IS was able to provide a confidence boost to empower a parent when engaging with professionals involved in her child's life and how in turn the parent wanted to then support other parents going through the system.

Kyle is 4 and has complex needs and isn't talking. He will be attending full time school in September 2015.

#### **Kyle's Story**

Kyle's mum contacted IS in a panic as she had been told she needed to hand her parental response for section A into school the following day. She was struggling to fill in the information and understand what she needed to write.

I arranged a home visit with Kyle's mum to help support her filling out the document, understand the language being used and what information she may need to provide. We talked about the EHC process, what to expect and how it would impact on her son. She was also concerned about Kyle's significant Health and Social Care needs. I explained how these would feature in the plan.

Kyle's mum was very vocal about what she felt her son's needs were but had considerable anxieties about the social care and speech & language being right in the plan. It was really important to spend time listening to Kyle's mum's thoughts and feelings about her son's needs and the provision he was receiving. She said she felt disconnected from school and the therapeutic services she received, and wanted more information about how she could work with other professionals to help make changes for Kyle at home.

Kyle's mum was hoping the transfer to an EHCP would make a difference helping her understand the support being provided and being more involved in planning for Kyle's future. I explained to her about the ethos the new SEND legislation and the emphasis on parents and their children being at the centre of the process. She felt encouraged by this but remained concerned about making her voice heard amongst professionals.

We discussed what aspirations she had for Kyle in the future and how it was important that these were written clearly in language she could understand. Kyle's mum found it difficult at first to think about Kyle's future as she said it felt uncertain. I listened and supported Kyle's mum and helped her focus on what she wanted the future to look like rather than just focusing on individual services. At the end of the visit she thanked me and stated she felt she had a better understanding about how to complete her part of the plan.

Before the EHC transfer meeting I arranged a pre-meeting with Kyle's mum to help her think about the points she wanted to discuss. We also made a plan about how she would like me to support her during the meeting. We discussed how and when she might be able to get her thoughts across and how I could help her with this. Kyle's mum asked me to help her understand any use of professional language in the meeting and asked me to intervene to ask professionals to explain their language if they started using language she may not understand. She felt this would be very important in helping her participate in the meeting

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and not feel embarrassed about speaking up. She also felt it would redress the parent-professional balance and ensure she did not feel undermined by professionals.

At the meeting I supported Kyle's mum, as agreed, to understand whenever professional terminology was used. She was then able to challenge some of the outcomes and provision being suggested. She explained calmly, with my support, that the outcomes and provision around speech and language were not specific enough and she did not feel they could be person-centred as she did not understand them.

After the meeting I followed up with Kyle's mum by phone to see how she felt about the meeting. She was very grateful about support in the meeting and stated that she felt she would have been unable to understand the language and talk to professionals about the plan without the help of the IS Service especially as she still felt overwhelmed by the meeting and the number of professionals there. Kyle's mum was very keen for me to visit her to help her understand the draft plan when it was produced, and enable her to check that everything was correct.

I contacted Kyle's mum around the time the draft was due to check that she had received it and to remind her about how long she had to respond with any changes she wanted to make to the plan. She had noticed some errors with the Health section of the plan and was worried that there may be other things she had missed. I supported her to write a series of prompts and questions about the outcomes and provision in the plan to return to the LA. She seemed empowered by the knowledge she had gained and now felt able to ring her SEN caseworker herself, to let them know she would be sending in amendments to the plan.

Kyle's mum sent off the comments to LA and received a phone call from SEN team to let her know they had made some changes to the EHCP. Where sections in the plan could not be amended this was then explained to her.

She rang to tell me what the SEN team had said and asked if I could come out again if she needed me to, when she received the amended new draft plan, which I agreed to. She read the new draft and was happy with the changes that were made and felt she was now able to understand the document.

Kyle's mum fed back to us that she felt she could not have navigated the process or felt confident enough to get changes made to the plan without IS support. She stated that she would recommend the service to any parents she knew and also invited the service to a parents coffee morning which she was setting up to help other families.